



MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR CREATIVE WORKFORCE INFRASTRUCTURE, CERTIFICATION & PROVENANCE

BACKGROUND

Women constitute the majority of Australia's creative labour force, operating across arts, culture, design, education, community, health, and micro-enterprise. Despite this scale, women's creative labour continues to function largely outside recognised workforce infrastructure — without national standards, certification pathways, provenance protection, or consistent economic measurement.

Since the passage of the Equal Pay Act (1969), successive policy frameworks have articulated principles of equality, participation, and fairness. However, no corresponding national workforce infrastructure has been established to translate women's creative labour into stable, legible, and economically recognised work within national systems.

As a result, women's creative work remains characterised by under-recognition, income volatility, unpaid labour displacement, and early to mid-career workforce exit — outcomes that cannot be attributed to participation, capability, or demand, but instead reflect structural system failure.

The Creative Women's Association (CWA) has been established to address this gap by defining, governing, and implementing national standards for women's creative workforce infrastructure through the Arts & Provenance sector.

These Minimum Standards articulate the baseline structural requirements necessary for women's creative labour to function as recognised economic activity within modern workforce, procurement, and productivity systems.

They are not a code of conduct, compliance regime, or funding program.

They define the **minimum conditions required for system integrity**.

THE MINIMUM STANDARDS

1. **Recognition of Creative Labour as Skilled Economic Work**

Women's creative labour must be recognised as skilled economic activity within workforce, productivity, and procurement systems.

2. **National Workforce Infrastructure**

Workforce systems must include defined structures for creative labour, including occupational recognition and progression pathways beyond project-based engagement.

3. **Certification of Professional Creative Practice**

Certification pathways must exist to validate professional creative practice and capability within economic and institutional contexts.

4. **Provenance, Attribution, and Value Protection**

Provenance and attribution mechanisms must protect the economic value of women's creative output and retain value at source.

5. **Visibility in Workforce and Economic Data**

Women's creative labour must be visible within national workforce and economic datasets.

6. **Accounting for Structural Constraints on Participation**

Workforce systems must account for unpaid labour, care load, and cumulative structural pressures as determinants of participation and retention.

7. **Pathways Beyond Early and Mid-Career Attrition**

Workforce architecture must support continuity, progression, and retention beyond early and mid-career exit points.

8. **Standards-Based Governance and Oversight**

National standards for women's creative workforce participation must be stewarded through an independent authority responsible for certification, governance, data integrity, and continuous review. **The Creative Women's Association (CWA) is established to perform this stewardship function for the Arts & Provenance sector.**

EVIDENCE BASE AND ALIGNMENT

These Minimum Standards have been developed in response to established national and international evidence identifying persistent structural gaps in creative workforce recognition and sustainability.

They are informed by:

- the Creative Workforce Scoping Study, which identifies the absence of recognised pathways, standards, and workforce architecture as a critical constraint on sector sustainability;
- national workforce, productivity, and unpaid labour data published by the Australian Bureau of Statistics and the Workplace Gender Equality Agency; and
- international frameworks recognising creative labour as a contributor to population-level health, wellbeing, and economic participation, including work by the World Health Organization on creative health and social prescribing.

These Standards are designed to address structural conditions, rather than individual behaviour or organisational practice.

PURPOSE AND USE

These Minimum Standards establish a shared baseline for governments, institutions, industry bodies, funders, and peak organisations engaging with women's creative labour.

Their absence represents a measurable workforce and economic failure, not an absence of participation or capability.

ENDORSEMENT

These Standards are intended to be endorsed voluntarily by organisations committed to structural integrity, workforce equity, and sustainable economic participation for women's creative labour.

LEGISLATIVE ALIGNMENT

These Minimum Standards are designed to function as a foundational framework capable of integration into future national workforce and provenance legislation for the Arts & Provenance sector.